

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make a number of editorial revisions. No new matter has been added.

Claim 8 has been amended so as to be dependent from claim 7 instead of claim 6 and claims 13 and 14 have been amended so as to be dependent from claim 12 instead of claim 11.

In addition, claims 1-21 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions. These revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. None of these amendments have been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, nor to address issues related to patentability and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Claims 1-8, 11 and 15-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maeda (US 6,546,052) in view of Ikeda (US 6,704,029). Claims 12-14 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Maeda in view of Ikeda and further in view of Kato (US 6,594,375).

Claims 9, 10 and 19 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

The above-mentioned rejections are respectfully traversed and submitted to be inapplicable for the following reasons.

Claim 1 is patentable over the combination of Maeda and Ikeda, since claim 1 recites a media editing method including, in part, determining whether or not a user included in an extracted region is facing a predesignated direction; selecting a part of an image sequence between time points determined as being when the user is facing the predesignated direction by scanning the image sequence from a start point to an end point, and from the end point to the start point; and editing the media including the selected part of the image sequence. The combination of Maeda and Ikeda fails to disclose or suggest these features of claim 1.

Maeda discloses an image processing apparatus including a TV camera 101 for sensing a moving image in front of a blue background, a TV camera 102 for sensing a moving image, an object extractor 103 for extracting an image of a person 1052 as an object image from the blue background, and an object encoding unit 105 for encoding the extracted object image. The image processing apparatus also includes a moving image editor 112 and an encoder 113 for encoding an edit result from the moving image editor 112. (See column 7, lines 9-42 and Figure 1).

During operation of the image processing apparatus, the TV camera 101 senses the image of the person 1052 as the object to be sensed against the blue background. The object extractor 103 then extracts the image of the person 1052 as a rectangular texture 1220 and extracts the blue background to generate mask information 1201. The object encoding unit 105 then encodes the extracted image of the person 1052 based on the rectangular texture 1220 and the mask information 1201, and the encoded data is transmitted to the moving image editor 112. Also, the TV camera 102 senses an image which is encoded and sent to the moving image editor 112. The moving image editor 112 then uses the data from the TV camera 101 and the TV camera 102 to separate the image of the person 1052 from a background image. (See column 7, lines 43-56; column 9, lines 16-29; column 11, lines 11-19 and Figures 1-4).

In the rejection, it is indicated that the TV camera 101 performs the operation of determining whether or not a user included in an extracted region is facing a predesignated direction. However, as discussed above, the TV camera 101 is only disclosed as sensing a moving image in front of a blue background. In other words, the TV camera 101 detects the movement of the person 1052 in general, and does not determine whether or not the person 1052 faces a predesignated direction. These are clearly two different things.

Also, as admitted in the rejection, Maeda fails to disclose or suggest selecting a part of an image sequence between time points determined as being when the user is facing the predesignated direction by scanning the image sequence from a start point to an end point, and from the end point to the start point. That Maeda fails to disclose or suggest this feature of claim 1 is clear, since Maeda fails to disclose or suggest determining whether or not the person 1052 faces the predesignated direction.

Finally, Maeda does disclose that the moving image editor 112 edits the encoded data received from the TV cameras 101, 102. However, since Maeda fails to disclose or suggest selecting the part of the image sequence between the time points determined as being when the user is facing the predesignated direction, the moving image editor 112 necessarily fails to disclose or suggest editing the media including the selected part of the image sequence.

Since Maeda fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned features of claim 1, it is necessary for Ikeda to disclose or suggest these features in order for the combination of these references to render claim 1 obvious.

Regarding Ikeda, it discloses an apparatus for specifying scene information in a moving picture. The apparatus is capable of performing an extracting process for extracting information pertaining to an important scene. During the process, a scene designation module 202 determines the start and end frames of the important scene in the moving picture, and a key frame serving as a key of the important scene. It is indicated that the process can be performed either manually or automatically based on an arithmetic operation. However, there are no details provided of how the automatic extraction would be accomplished. Instead, it is indicated that the user can manually designate the start and end frames, and also the key frame. (See column 5, line 52 – column 6, line 43 and Figure 6).

Based on the above discussion, it is apparent that Ikeda is concern with extracting a particular scene from a moving picture and does not disclose or suggest determining whether or not a user included in an extracted region is facing a predesignated direction as recited in claim 1. Further, while Ikeda does disclose the manual selection of a scene from a moving picture and suggests that the scene selection could be performed automatically, Ikeda does not disclose or suggest that such scene selection is determined as being when the user is facing the predesignated direction by scanning the image sequence from a start point to an end point, and from the end point to the start point. In addition, while Ikeda does disclose the extraction of the selected scenes, Ikeda does not disclose or suggest editing the moving picture including the selected part determined as being when the user is facing the predesignated direction.

Since Ikeda does not address the deficiencies of Maeda, it is apparent that the combination of Maeda and Ikeda does not render claim 1 obvious as indicated in the Office Action.

It is noted that Kato is relied upon as disclosing a face area extraction apparatus. However, Kato also fails to disclose or suggest the above-discussed features of claim 1.

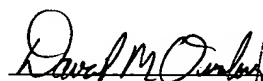
As for claims 15 and 21, they are patentable over the references relied upon in the rejections for the same reasons set forth above in support of claim 1. That is, claims 15 and 21 recite similar features to claim 1 that are not disclosed or suggested by the references.

Because of the above-mentioned distinctions, it is believed clear that claims 1-21 are allowable over the references relied upon in the rejections. Furthermore, it is submitted that the distinctions are such that a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention would not have been motivated to make any combination of the references of record in such a manner as to result in, or otherwise render obvious, the present invention as recited in claims 1-21. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 1-21 are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there are issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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